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I de-mystify SEO and online marketing for business owners.

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The Top 10 Benefits Of Social Media Marketing

To some entrepreneurs, social media marketing is the “next big thing,” a temporary yet powerful fad that must be taken advantage of while it’s still in the spotlight. To others, it’s a buzzword with no practical advantages and a steep, complicated learning curve.

Because it appeared quickly, social media has developed a reputation by some for being a passing marketing interest, and therefore, an unprofitable one. The statistics, however, illustrate a different picture. [According to Hubspot](#), 92% of marketers in 2014 claimed that social media marketing was important for their business, with 80% indicating their efforts increased traffic to their websites. And according to [Social Media Examiner](#), 97% of marketers are currently participating in social media—but 85% of participants aren’t sure what social media tools are the best to use.

This demonstrates a huge potential for social media marketing to increase sales, but a lack of understanding on how to achieve those results. Here’s a look at just some of the ways social media marketing can improve your business:

1. Increased Brand Recognition. Every opportunity you have to [syndicate your content](#) and increase your visibility is valuable. Your social media networks are just new channels for your brand’s voice and content. This is important because it simultaneously makes you easier and more accessible for new customers, and makes you more familiar and recognizable for existing customers. For example, a frequent Twitter user could hear about your company for the first time only after stumbling upon it in a newsfeed. Or, an otherwise apathetic customer might become better acquainted with your brand after seeing your presence on multiple networks.

2. Improved brand loyalty. According to a [report published by Texas Tech University](#), brands who engage on social media channels enjoy higher loyalty from their customers. The report concludes “Companies should take advantage of the tools social media gives them when it comes to connecting with their audience. A strategic and open social media plan could prove influential in morphing consumers into being brand loyal.” Another [study published by Convince&Convert](#) found that 53% of Americans who follow brands in social are more loyal to those brands.

3. More Opportunities to Convert. Every post you make on a social media platform is an opportunity for customers to convert. When you build a following, you’ll simultaneously have access to new customers, recent customers, and old customers, and you’ll be able to interact with all of them. Every blog post, image, video, or comment you share is a chance for someone to react, and every reaction could lead to a site visit, and eventually a conversion. Not every interaction with your brand results in a conversion, but every positive interaction increases the likelihood of an eventual conversion. Even if your click-through rates are low, the sheer number

of opportunities you have on social media is significant. And as I pointed out in my article, “[The Four Elements of Any Action, And How To Use Them In Your Online Marketing Initiative](#),” “opportunity” is the first element of any action.

4. Higher conversion rates. Social media marketing results in higher conversion rates in a few distinct ways. Perhaps the most significant is its [humanization element](#); the fact that brands become more humanized by interacting in social media channels. Social media is a place where brands can act like people do, and this is important because people like doing business with other people; not with companies.

Additionally, [studies have shown](#) that social media has a 100% higher lead-to-close rate than outbound marketing, and a higher number of social media followers tends to improve trust and credibility in your brand, representing social proof. As such, simply building your audience in social media can improve conversion rates on your existing traffic.

5. Higher Brand Authority. Interacting with your customers regularly is a show of good faith for other customers. When people go to compliment or brag about a product or service, they turn to social media. And when they post your brand name, new audience members will want to follow you for updates. The more people that are talking about you on social media, the more valuable and authoritative your brand will seem to new users. Not to mention, if you can [interact with major influencers on Twitter](#) or other social networks, your visible authority and reach will skyrocket.

6. Increased Inbound Traffic. Without social media, your inbound traffic is limited to people already familiar with your brand and individuals searching for keywords you currently rank for. Every social media profile you add is another path leading back to your site, and every piece of content you syndicate on those profiles is another opportunity for a new visitor. The more quality content you syndicate on social media, the more inbound traffic you’ll generate, and more traffic means more leads and more conversions.

7. Decreased Marketing Costs. [According to Hubspot](#), 84% of marketers found as little as six hours of effort per week was enough to generate increased traffic. Six hours is not a significant investment for a channel as large as social media. If you can lend just one hour a day to developing your content and syndication strategy, you could start seeing the results of your efforts. Even paid advertising through Facebook and Twitter is relatively cheap (depending on your goals, of course). Start small and you’ll never have to worry about going over budget—once you get a better feel for what to expect, you can increase your budget and increase your conversions correspondingly.

8. Better Search Engine Rankings. SEO is the best way to capture relevant traffic from search engines, but the requirements for success are always changing. It’s no longer enough to regularly update your blog, ensure optimized title tags and meta descriptions, and distribute links pointing back to your site. Google and other search engines may be calculating their rankings using social media presence as a significant factor, because of the fact that strong brands almost always use social media. As such, being active on social media could act as a “brand signal” to search engines that your brand is legitimate, credible, and trustworthy. That means, if you want to rank for a given set of keywords, having a strong social media presence could be almost mandatory.

9. Richer Customer Experiences. Social media, at its core, is a communication channel like email or phone calls. Every customer interaction you have on social media is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate your customer service level and enrich your relationship with your customers. For example, if a customer complains about your product on Twitter, you can immediately address the comment, apologize publicly, and take action to make it right. Or, if a customer compliments you, you can thank them and recommend additional products. It's a personal experience that lets customers know you care about them.

10. Improved Customer Insights. Social media also gives you an opportunity to gain valuable information about what your customers are interested in and how they behave, via [social listening](#). For example, you can monitor user comments to see what people think of your business directly. You can segment your content syndication lists based on topic and see which types of content generate the most interest—and then produce more of that type of content. You can [measure conversions](#) based on different promotions posted on various social media channels and eventually find a perfect combination to generate revenue.

These are the benefits of sustaining a long-term social media campaign, but if you're still apprehensive about getting started, consider these points:

- **Your Competition Is Already Involved.** Your competitors are already involved on social media, which means your potential social media traffic and conversions are being poached. Don't let your competitors reap all the benefits while you stand idly by. If, somehow, your competition is not involved on social media, there's even more of a reason to get started—the field is open.
- **The Sooner You Start, the Sooner You Reap the Benefits.** Social media is all about relationship building, and it tends to grow exponentially as your followers tell their friends, and their friends tell their friends, and so on. The sooner you start, the sooner you'll be able to start growing that audience.
- **Potential Losses Are Insignificant.** Realistically, you don't have anything to lose by getting involved in social media. The amount of time and money it takes to create your profiles and start posting is usually minimal, compared to other marketing channels. Just six hours a week or a few hundred dollars is all it takes to establish your presence.

Conclusion

The longer you wait, the more you have to lose. Social media marketing, when done right, can lead to more customers, more traffic, and more conversions, and it's here to stay. If you're interested in getting started but aren't sure where to begin—head over to my [Resource Library](#) or leave a comment below!

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